**ST COLUMBA’S COLLEGE**

**PORTAFERRY**



**Attendance Policy**

 **(Revised 2023)**

#  Date of Review:

#  Date Ratified By Board of Governors:

**St Columba’s College** recognises that punctual and regular attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning and is, therefore, committed to maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential.

St Columba’s College will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

St Columba’s College recognises that punctual and regular attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning and is, therefore, committed to maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality.

We also believe that encouraging good attendance will help students to develop self-confidence, independence, self-discipline and a sense of responsibility for themselves.

 Good attendance habits established at a young age will prepare our pupils for future opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

 In contrast, poor attendance and poor timekeeping will foster opposite attributes and skills to those listed above.

**Aims of our Attendance Policy**

 1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St Columba’s College

 2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.

3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.

4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service

**Role of the School**

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance;

Form teachers and Head of Key Stage should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2017/15,

 St Columba’s College is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

 **School Responsibility** The school will:

* Make daily, accurate recordings of attendance, recording the reasons for absence.
* Analyse attendance trends monthly.
* Correspond with parents if there is a concern.
* Provide the Educational Welfare Officer with a printout monthly, of all children who have an attendance percentage of 85% or below.
* Complete a Referral to the E.W.O. if deemed necessary.
* Provide an annual attendance figure on each School Report in June.
* Recognise good attendance by providing 100% Attendance Certificate which can be included in a child’s Record of Achievement.

**Role of Parent/Guardian**

Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full-time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

If a child is registered in school, their parent/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

**Parents should:**

* Ensure that their child/children attend school regularly.
* Ensure that their child arrives in school punctually. Our school opens its doors at 8.00 am and children can come in from that time. School starts at 8.50am.
* Contact the school on the first day of their child’s absence giving reasons for absence and expected duration of the absence.
* **Provide the school, on the first day of return after an absence, with a signed note giving reasons for the absence**. (see attached also available in Student homework diary).
* If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.
* Contact the school in confidence if there is a problem which is affecting attendance or punctuality.
* Communicate with the school if their child is a reluctant attender. The school will work with and support parents. Parents should not cover up a child’s reluctance or give in to pressure from their child to excuse them from attending school as this will cause long term problems.
* Not book holidays during term time
* Not arrange medical/ dental appointments during school hours.
* Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.50am for registration and the beginning of classes.
* It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child’s attendance record.
* If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the form teacher or Head of Key Stage to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

**Role of Pupils**

**Pupil Responsibility:**

At St Columba’s College we encourage pupils to take increasing responsibility for their attendance. Pupils should:

* Attend school regularly.
* Arrive on time punctually.
* Tell a member of staff about any problem that may prevent them from attending regularly or from being punctual regularly.
* If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return. (also available in student homework diary)

**Lateness -** Pupils who arrive for school after registration closes at 9.00 am.

 If a child regularly enters a class after 9.00am there is a threefold effect:

1. The child becomes the centre of attention and is often embarrassed. This can cause the child to resent coming to school and in turn lead to the child becoming a reluctant attender.
2. If a child enters the classroom after 9.00am the teacher will often have started a lesson and this has to be interrupted so that the late child can be registered. This can cause great interruption to the teacher and add extra workload.
3. The teaching and learning of all the children in the class can be adversely affected by a regular latecomer.

**Role of Governors**

**Governors Responsibility:**  The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for pupil attendance, but on a day-to-day basis, this responsibility is delegated to the Principal. The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school’s Attendance and Lateness Policy. Attendance will be an item on the agenda on BOG meetings and The Principal will give a report.

**Monitoring Attendance**

* At the end of each month, all children with an 85% or below attendance will be reviewed by the Head of Key Stage and long-term attendance patterns analysed
* After consultation with the pupil’s form teacher, a letter will be sent to the parents advising them of our concern, if it is felt necessary
* If attendance remains a concern, a second letter will be sent, in which the particular concerns will be highlighted again, and parents will be asked to contact the school to arrange a meeting at which the issue can be discussed.
* If attendance does not improve and concerns remain, then a Referral Form may be sent to the Education and Welfare Officer.

**Monitoring Lateness**

As with attendance, lateness is also analysed by the Head of Key Stage at the end of each month. After consultation with the pupil’s form teacher, a letter will be sent to the parents, if the child receives 5 or more L or U marks in one month. As with Monitoring Attendance, a similar process will be followed if there are further concerns regarding punctuality.

**Absence Procedures**

All parents/carers are required to complete the attached absence notification form which provides space for a clear reason for any absence.

**Education Welfare Service**

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children’s education. If a pupil’s absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

**Family holidays during Term Time**

St Columba’s College discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils’ learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

**Signature –**

 **Principal Signature –**

**Chair, Board of Governors**

**Appendix 1**

**Absence Note**

**Please note that this form must be completed for each period of pupil absence and returned to the school immediately.**

**Name of Pupil**

**Class/ Form Teacher’s name**

**Date(s) of absence**

**Reason for absence**

**Signed (Parent/Guardian) Date**